

Message Text

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FOLLOWING TEL SENT SECSTATE FROM TEHRAN 12 NOVEMBER REPEATED

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TAGS: ICRC, IR

SUBJ: STANTON STATEMENT TO INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS CONFERENCE

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF STATEMENT BY AMERICAN RED CROSS CHAIRMAN, DR, FRANK STANTON, INTRODUCING RESOLUTION ON ACCOUNTING FOR THE DEAD AND MISSING IN ARMED CONFLICTS, NOVEMBER 12, IN GENERAL COMMISSION OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE RED CROSS. PLEASE PASS TEXT TO AMERICAN RED CROSS NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS.

2. BEGIN TEXT: THE SEARCH FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THOSE WHO ARE MISSING DURING AND AFTER ARMED CONFLICTS IS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT RESPONSIBILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE NAME OF THE RED CROSS. THE PROBLEM IS PRESENT IN THE AFTERMATH OF VIRTUALLY EVERY ARMED CONFLICT: WE ALL RECALL PICTURES OF RELATIVES STANDING AT TRAIN STATIONS, OR AT DOCKSIDE, AS PRISONERS-OF-WAR RETURNED FROM CAPTIVITY, WITH SIGNS ASKING QTE DOES ANYONE HAVE INFORMATION ON MY SON UNQTE OR FATHER OR HUSBAND, AS THE CASE MAY BE? THE ENDING OF ARMED HOSTILITIES IS ALWAYS WELCOME -- BUT FOR THE FAMILIES OF THE MISSING IT IS A TIME OF SPECIAL DIFFICULTY.

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THE CERTAINTY OF KNOWING A LOVED ONE HAS DIED WOULD

SEEM PREFERABLE TO THE DRAWN-OUT ANGUISH OF NOT KNOWING
THE FATE OF ONE WHO IS MISSING IN ACTION.

THE RED CROSS HAS A NATURAL AND TRADITIONAL ROLE TO
PLAY IN RESOLVING THIS HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM. FOR
OVER 100 YEARS, INFORMATION BUREAUX ORGANIZED BY THE
RED CROSS HAVE HELPED FIND AND EXCHANGE INFORMATION
ON THOSE WHO DIED IN CAPTIVITY AND OTHER MISSING IN
CONNECTION WITH ARMED CONFLICTS.

THE PURPOSE OF THE RESOLUTION WE HAVE JOINED IN
PROPOSING IS TO REMIND THE PARTIES TO ARMED CONFLICTS
--WHATEVER THE CIRCUMSTANCE AND WHEREVER THEY MAY BE
-- OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM,
AND TO CALL ATTENTION TO THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL
SOCIETIES, THE ICRC, AND THE TRACING AGENCIES AND
THE PROTECTING POWERS IN RESOLVING IT. THE RESOLUTION
CALLS ON PARTIES TO ARMED CONFLICTS TO HELP LOCATE
AND CARE FOR THE GRAVES OF THE DEAD, TO FACILITATE
THE DISINTERMENT AND RETURN OF REMAINS, AND TO
EXCHANGE INFORMATION ABOUT THOSE WHO ARE MISSING.

IT APPLIES EQUALLY TO SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS,
INCLUDING, FOR EXAMPLE, JOURNALISTS. THIS
RESOLUTION COVERS PERSONS OF ALL PARTIES -- INCLUDING
THOSE NOT PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT.

THESE TASKS ARE TRADITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE
PARTIES TO ARMED CONFLICTS -- AND IT IS A RED CROSS
TRADITION TO HELP RESOLVE THEM. THERE CAN NEVER BE
100 PERCENT SUCCESS. BUT THERE SHOULD BE RECOGNITION OF
THE HUMANITARIAN OBLIGATION OF PARTIES TO ARMED
CONFLICTS. I HOPE THIS CONFERENCE WILL SUPPORT THIS
RESOLUTION UNANIMOUSLY. END TEXT. HELMS UNQTE
KISSINGER

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